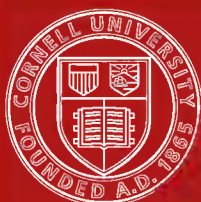


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TRANSYLVANIA UNDER THE --- RULE OF ROUMANIA

REPORT OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN
COMMISSION



BUDAPEST, 1921

THE EDITION OF THE POPULAR
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CORNELL

NOTE

This Report of the Commission appointed by the American Unitarian Association to visit Transylvania forms part of a fuller statement about to be published in the United States.

Meanwhile, it is important that people in this country should have an opportunity of reading this indictment of Roumanian Rule in Transylvania. Past experience of the futility of the pledges made by Roumanian Government Officials shows that there is little prospect of justice being done or freedom being secured in Transylvania until the pressure of public opinion operates through the Assembly and Council of the League of Nations.

W. COPELAND BOWIE.

Essex Hall, Essex Street,
Strand, London, W.C. 2.
October 30, 1920.

TRANSYLVANIA UNDER ROUMANIAN RULE

REPORT OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN COMMISSION.

FOLLOWING the report of the Rev. William H. Drummond, who was sent October, 1919, by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the American Unitarian Association to investigate the condition, under the Roumanian Government, of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania, the Directors of the American Unitarian Association appointed a Commission for the relief of that Church.

This Commission raised a sum of money (a little more than 42,000 dollars), and sent a delegation of three members to administer the fund, and to bear the greetings of the American Unitarians to their brethren in Transylvania. This delegation, which came to be known as the 'American Unitarian Mission,' consisted of the Rev. Sydney B. Snow, Associate Minister of King's Chapel, Boston (who had acted as executive secretary of the Relief Commission), the Rev. Joel H. Metcalf, Ph.D. of the Unitarian Church Winchester, Mass., and Mr. Edward B. Witte, United States Naval Reserve Flying Corps, of Buffalo, N.Y. The Mission sailed from New York on March 13, 1920, and its leader, who preceded by a few days the other two from Bucharest, arrived in Kolozsvár, the principal town of Transylvania, and seat of the Unitarian and Presbyterian Bishops, on April 10th. Dr. Metcalf made a trip to England early in June, in order to purchase supplies of clothing, and has now returned to Transylvania with the same; the other two members of the Mission did not leave Kolozsvár until July 7, 1920. They were, therefore, in Transylvania for a period of practically three months.

Following the instructions of the Chairman of their Commission (Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D.D., President of the American Unitarian Association) to visit as many of the Unitarian congregations as possible, they went to one hundred and five towns and villages, paying visits to all save nine of the mother churches of their denomina-

tion in the land. This errand took them into all except three of the fifteen counties of Transylvania; and of the three missed, one is a sparsely settled mountain region. They were given passes by the Roumanian authorities to circulate through the whole country; and, except at the beginning and end of their journeys, they were little interfered with by officials, detectives, or gendarmes. In every place visited they met and talked with the principal citizens of Hungarian nationality; in some of the larger places, which they used as headquarters, they stayed for several days or a week.

The members of this Mission are the first from the outside world, since Roumanian occupation, to travel so extensively in Transylvania. They have had unusual opportunities to observe the methods and results of Roumanian administration, particularly as affecting the Hungarian churches and schools. Their errand was primarily to bring relief and the assurance of goodwill from one branch of the Unitarian church to another; they went under instructions to refrain from all political connexions. Their only bias is their interest in the welfare of their Church and the well-being of its members (and, of course, of other churches which are in like case); they are not concerned with the political desires of the Hungarian state.

1—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

After three months in Transylvania, our conclusion is that the Roumanian sovereignty creates an impossible situation. Regardless of the theoretical right or wrong in the transfer of this territory, it places more than two million people of western civilization and western moral standards under the domination of a people with a semi-eastern civilization and moral standards. It extends the Balkan blight into a land hitherto free of it. It is exactly the same situation that might arise if portions of the south-western territory of the United States were turned over to Mexico and several million Americans were forced to live under the type of government which that country has developed.

It is our opinion that unless Transylvania is given independence (at least as complete as that which Great Britain gave to South Africa after the Boer War) it will be impossible for Hungarians to live in the land at all, and Hungarian institutions will rapidly decline and disappear. Towards such a result, we believe, the Roumanian policy has from the beginning been deliberately directed.

There are, it is true, a few civil officials who realize the evil of that policy, and appear to be trying to give a decent administration. Such a man is Prince Sturdza, Chief Prefect at Kolozsvár (a man of cosmopolitan education); another is the Prefect at Sepsiszentgyörgy (a Transylvanian-Roumanian, who under the Hungarian Government

held an important post in the Department of Commerce at Budapest). The hands of men like these, however, are to a large degree tied by the military, and in another direction by the Siguranta (a secret police modelled on that of Russia under the Czar), whose agents swarm throughout the country, and who are independent of both civil and military authorities, although sometimes working with both. Over this conflict of authority the Prefect at Sepsiszentgyörgy, to ~~whom~~ whom we went on behalf of the cantor of the Unitarian church, arrested by the Siguranta, shrugged his shoulders helplessly. 'My position is very hard,' he said frankly. The administration policy, however, is not that of these comparatively enlightened individuals, but is one that appeals to men accustomed to crude brute force in dealing with soldiers and peasants; nor is it likely to rise higher than the general standards of the nation which is responsible for it.

~~Its immediate~~ result has been the complete unification of the Hungarian population against the new rule. We had not, before our visit, thought that such solidarity as we found was possible to attain. Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Jew; aristocracy, middle class, peasantry—all have been fused into one. Any difference, any conflict of interest, sinks before this single interest. Roumanian officials of all grades have been so successful in carrying out a policy of insult, terrorism and repression, that even were their methods reversed at once, it would take more than a generation to overcome the bitterness, suspicion and hostility which the doings of the past year and a half have engendered.

The methods used by the Roumanian Government in its attempt to Roumanize Transylvania have been, in general, exile and colonization, persecution and terrorism. The treatment of churches and schools, as centres of national feeling, will be taken up in separate sections.

(1.) EXILE AND COLONIZATION.

The first step taken, early in the Roumanian occupation, was the return to Hungary of all who had settled in Transylvania since 1913. The next move was aimed at the leaders of the Hungarians, those in official positions of every kind (including teachers), being required on a few days' notice to take an oath of allegiance to the Roumanian King, which was refused by most men because the Peace Conference had not at that time decided the sovereignty in Transylvania. This was described to us by Prince Sturdza as 'desertion of their posts' on the part of the officials, who were later given opportunity, he declared, to subscribe to a simple oath faithfully to perform the duties of their office; but on careful inquiry, we found that the Prince, who was not in Kolozsvár at the time, had been misinformed

as to this point. The proposal came from the other side. Hungarian officials offered to take such an oath, which was refused by Dr. Maniu, the then highest civil authority in the land. The result, which it is fair to assume was anticipated by the Roumanians, was a considerable exodus of men of these classes with their families, and, of course, a flooding of the cities and towns with new officials hastily appointed, in part from among the Transylvanian Roumanians, but principally from Bucharest. In Fogaras, for example, which we visited in June, it was estimated that out of a Hungarian population of 6000, nearly 1000 had, in one way or another, been driven out, including more than fifty families described to us as of the intelligentest of the town. The early rush of deportations was over when we arrived in Transylvania, but repatriation, forced by the conditions of life under Roumanian domination, was steadily going forward. On July 8th, we crossed the border from Püspökfürdő (near Nagyvárad) on an exile train. It consisted of five covered goods vans filled with families (and all their possessions) from Torda; some of the women wept when the train was pushed over the border; they had been obliged (like all who go) to swear never to return, and felt that they had bidden good-bye to their relatives in Transylvania forever.

The most pathetic case of exile which came under our observation, however, occurred in May, while we were in Kolozsvár. The Roumanians at that time took over a privately endowed Hungarian institution for the blind, and deaf and dumb. The Transylvanian children they scattered to their homes; those born in Hungary, fifteen in number, they put into a cattle car with five kilos of bread apiece, and shipped over the border. They refused permission to a physician to accompany them.

Many Roumanians have been brought into Transylvania for many purposes. First came the families of officers, then the new officials, professors and teachers with their families, then shopkeepers, for whose benefit shops were requisitioned from Hungarians. When the former Hungarian University was opened at Kolozsvár as a Roumanian institution, many students were imported, there being so few applicants from the Roumanian-speaking population of Transylvania, most of whom, we found, are a hard working peasantry, who want all their sons to stay on the farm.

(2.) PETTY PERSECUTION.

Not easiest to endure, of the trials of the Hungarian people in Transylvania under Roumanian domination, are the little things—the pin-pricks, the petty tyrannies—by means of which a hostile administration keeps them in constant irritation. A chief instrument is that of language. If one half the pains that have been taken

in changing Hungarian signs and notices into Roumanian (in places where not a single person understands Roumanian) were expended on useful administrative activities, Hungarians might now be blessing the Providence that gave them new rulers. The *reductio ad absurdum* of the effort may be seen at country railway crossings in Szeklerland, with its unmixed Hungarian population, where the warning notices have been carefully changed to Roumanian. In some places our churches have been obliged to expunge the familiar Unitarian motto over their doors 'Egy az Isten' (God is One). All communications with officials must be in Roumanian, and late in June the Unitarian bishop of Transylvania made application, duly translated into Roumanian, and signed and stamped with his seal, for permission to hold the regular August meeting of the Representative Consistory of his Church. It was returned with the note that no further applications from him would be received until the words on the Bishop's ancient seal (Unitarius Püspök) were changed to Roumanian.

The succession of Roumanian holidays furnishes another opportunity for this sort of annoyance. In all the towns (and most of the towns are Hungarian) every householder must hang out a Roumanian flag, of specified size on national and church festivals. We have seen the gendarmes at the house-doors to enforce this display. The Eastern ecclesiastical calendar is a week behind the western; and Hungarians in Transylvania, having finished their own observances, must close their shops and stop their work for two or three days in the following week while the Roumanians, of whom there may be only a few in the community, have their festival. On some of these days the Hungarians are ordered to participate in the celebrations. We have with us a copy of Prince Sturdza's order to the Unitarian Bishop of Transylvania that a Te Deum for the royal family must be sung in at least one church of the denomination in every place on May 10, a Roumanian national holiday. On May 20, Greek ascension day, a national celebration for the Roumanian heroes who died in the war was proclaimed. We happened to be at that time in Marosvásárhely, principal town of Szeklerland, centre of an all-Hungarian population, and could see the bitter resentment which the orders to observe it provoked. These were very particular, and one official (Deputy-Mayor of Szászváros) accompanied his proclamation with this threat: 'I call your attention to Numbers 4 and 5 of the order, viz., the order having been issued by the Seventh Military Division, its transgression will be a political crime, and punished according to martial law.' Among other features, 'the ecclesiastical authorities in priestly garb, and all state and denominational schools and colleges without regard to national or sectarian differences, with their professors,' were ordered to march in a religious procession to a Te Deum celebrated by the orthodox church. In Marosvásárhely, similar orders were issued. To avoid obedience, all denominational schools were closed

a week earlier for the Whitsuntide holidays. Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy merely disregarded the order so far as it referred to them, and in this instance the authorities were wise enough not to attempt punishment.

Destruction and defacement of national monuments have added to the bitter feeling. In Marosvásárhely the statue of Kossuth (and the statues of Petöfi, the greatest Hungarian poet, and Rákóczy and Bem, national heroes) were torn from their pedestals. We were informed that the people were kept one night in their houses while the soldiers pulled the statues down; the authorities, when protest was made, were apologetic for the 'unauthorized act' of the soldiers. In some of the villages (in Böződujfalu we saw evidences of such activities) gendarmes entered the houses and destroyed national pictures.

In certain places the law with regard to assembly (of more than three) is rigidly enforced. In Dicsőszentmárton, where we spent several days, none of the people could entertain us without application formally made in the Roumanian language. In Sepsiszentgyörgy such an application was denied the curator of the Unitarian congregation; and in this town detectives entered the house while we were at supper with the Unitarian Dean of the District. In other places, it is only fair to add, this rule as affecting private houses has become a dead letter; people pay no attention to it, and ask whom they please to break bread with them.

On petty tyranny by gendarmes there is apparently no check. In many places we learned that they requisition supplies freely, not only for themselves, but to send to their families in Roumania.

(3.) TERRORISM.

Before going to Transylvania, we had heard much of Roumanian atrocities, but knowing the temper of the times, we were inclined to be sceptical about the reports; and those atrocities which did occur, we thought might be, as Dr. Vaida-Voevod, former Prime Minister, told us in Bucharest, the unauthorized acts of a war-brutalized gendarmerie. After our travels in the country, however, we became convinced that they were part of a deliberate policy designed to keep the Hungarian population in a state of fear. To a considerable degree, we found the policy to be successful; many people, and some whole communities lived in constant dread as to what might happen next. No man knew just where the lightning might fall.

(i.) ARRESTS AND INTERNMENTS.

After one of our meetings, on June 13 in Sepsiszentgyörgy, the cantor of the Unitarian church and another gentleman were arrested

and held in jail over night, because some of the people had spontaneously broken out with the Hungarian hymn. (There is no law or ordinance against singing this hymn in Transylvania.) We were told on inquiring next day that they were held 'for examination,' and they were later released; but if they were wanted merely for examination, a summons at their residences would have been sufficient. After another of our meetings, held on June 7th in Székelyderzs (a religious service of the same character that was held in all churches which we visited) the schoolmaster and three presbyters of the congregation were arrested, charged with using the occasion to instigate against the Government. They had not been tried and they had not been released when we left Transylvania a month later, and their arrest had caused great uneasiness among many of the people with whom we had associated.

We were told many instances of sudden arrest followed by long imprisonment without trial, or by internment. The Chief Curator of the Udvarhely District of the Unitarian Church, Andrew Barabás, former Judge of the Orphans' Court; and Domokos Mátéfy, former finance director for the county, Curator of the Udvarhely church, told us in detail of their arrest after their refusal to subscribe to the Roumanian oath. A teacher in the Unitarian college in Székelykeresztur was suddenly arrested last December, with several of his students, for discussing the war, unfavourably to Roumania, in school (not public) debate. All were taken to Kolozsvár and held there for some time. In the early days of the occupation many were interned, but most of these have been allowed by now to go to their homes. Roumanian authorities said some time ago that all had been released, but in Fogaras, on June 15th, we talked with a clergyman who, on the previous day, had visited twenty-four men interned in a near by town. He gave us a list of their names.

(ii.) BEATINGS.

The use of the rod is still customary among Roumanians, and it has been freely resorted to in order to terrorize Hungarians in Transylvania. In more than half of the villages visited we were given circumstantial accounts of beatings by soldiers and gendarmes. In several instances we talked with the victims. Many of the beatings took place during the search for weapons at various times last year. Some men were beaten because weapons were found; others were beaten because weapons were not found, on suspicion that they were hidden. The cantor of the Unitarian church at Csegez, where we spent a day, was among those beaten for this cause (twenty-five lashes were given, and the butt end of guns were used); eight or ten men besides him were flogged. In Nagyenyed

which we also visited we were told that more than twenty men were beaten during the search in April, 1919.

Other beatings were given without immediate cause—on suspicion or merely to terrorize. In Homorodkarácsonyfalva we talked with Mr. Dionysius Barabás, a fine looking gentleman of sixty, member of the Chief Consistory of the Unitarian Church. He was arrested without other apparent cause than that he was the prominent man of his village, taken to the fields where no one could look on, and there beaten with guns and by hand. He was then brought back to the village and released. A similar case is that of Mr. Coloman Kovács, a lawyer in Sepszisentgyörgy, arrested last November after he had refused to take the oath to the Roumanian King. He told us that men came into his cell at midnight, waked him up and beat him. He was released after two days without trial.

At Árkos men were beaten for spreading the rumour that Nagyvárad, a border city, had been evacuated; the last beating before our visit was on May 1st of this year. In Kissolymos, where we held a service on Whit-Sunday, the minister later informed us that the gendarmes beat the young men in dispersing the crowds in the square after our service. In Székelykál, which we visited on May 17, Francis Mátyás had been beaten a few days before by gendarmes with the flats of their swords. The Unitarian minister at Datk, Michael Szén, told us himself about being beaten by soldiers on a requisition tour. Up to January sixteen members of his congregation had been thus maltreated.

The Unitarian teacher in Szentivánlaborfalva was beaten for saying that Transylvania would never belong to Roumania until there were no more Szeklers (Hugarians of that section). At Alsórákos the cantor of the Unitarian church was beaten because he had resisted Roumanian peasants disguised as soldiers who were requisitioning things; there was fighting in the village and a man was killed; the village was fined for disorder. At Bözödujfalu the teacher whom we met was rehearsing some of the girls in a school building for a play, to be given for the benefit of officials who did not take the oath to the Roumanian King. Gendarmes came and beat the teacher and some of the girls, hurting two of them badly. Twelve young people of the Unitarian Church in Nyomát were beaten in an attempt to force them to testify against their minister (his story will be told later); some were made to kneel on kernels of maize for four hours; one had his ears so boxed that the drums were broken.

At Vadad we found that six members of the Unitarian congregation were beaten because ploughs had been stolen from a neighbouring village, and it was hoped to obtain a confession. In Ikland a member of the Unitarian congregation was beaten for refusing lodging to a gendarme. At Vargyas a man was flogged for not greeting the

gendarmes. At Kénos we were told that one of the beatings was for speaking in Hungarian to a soldier. Oklánd, Abásfalva and Székelyszentmiklós are other places where we were given detailed narratives of beatings.

In Szentgerice, Mr. Gabriel Gál, Treasurer of the Unitarian Congregation and brother of the Director of the Unitarian college in Kolozsvár, was shot and killed by an officer because he had accused a soldier of stealing a purse. It happened on February 21, 1919, during a search for weapons. The officer, having, as he thought, assured himself that the soldier did not have the purse, challenged Mr. Gal to find it, threatening punishment for false accusation if he failed. Mr. Gal found it in the soldiers's trousers; the officer shot him, and reported that a great crowd in the village threatened and he killed a man accidentally. We talked with eye-witnesses of this event. In Felsőrákos, another village which we visited, two men died just before the beginning of the current year, as result of beatings. One had been accused of stealing, the other was beaten because part of a weapon was found in his house.

Among wanton cruelties, the treatment of the Curator of the Unitarian church in Iszló was the worst case which we came across. The Curator of a congregation in Transylvania is always respected; he holds a post of honour in the village. We met and talked with this man—a simple honest farmer, sixty-three years of age. Last October, having a good yield of plums, he proceeded to make brandy out of them. At this time, Hungarians recognized the Roumanians as occupiers of the country only, and the Curator had no intention of paying them a tax on his brandy. The gendarmes discovered the liquor, and gave him his choice of punishment—to take fifty lashes from the whip ('We will beat you so that your eyes will pop up to the sky'); or to drink a litre of the brandy in two hours. He elected the second alternative, and the gendarmes sat by and watched the torture, forcing him to sing and dance during the early stages of his intoxication. The old man nearly died; he did not fully recover for two months.

Towards the end of our stay, a new occasion for brutalities was arising in the enrolment of Hungarian young men in the Roumanian army. It has been denied that any Hungarian men have been called up, but we saw them at the centers of enrolment. In Marosvásárhely, while one of our mission was in town, young men gathered about the pedestal on which the Kossuth statue used to stand, to protest against enrolment prior to the signing of the peace treaty. Some of them wore Hungarian colours; one waved a Hungarian banner. They were surrounded, arrested, and badly beaten. In Bölön, a village of 2800 people with a large Unitarian church, which we visited later, there was a similar occurrence at the enrolment of April 15th last.

Most of the youths of the village were flogged; one, a member of the congregation, who had rashly carried a Hungarian banner, died soon after his beating.

II.—HUNGARIAN CHURCHES IN TRANSYLVANIA

These are evidently regarded by the Roumanian Government as centres of national feeling, and so in a sense they are, for religion and race follow each other very closely in Transylvania, all Hungarians being Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Unitarian or Lutheran, and all Roumanians being Greek Orthodox or Greek United (i.e., united with the Church of Rome, its principal differences from the Orthodox Church being its acknowledgement of papal supremacy and its adoption of the Western calendar). Roumanian officials have accordingly watched carefully, and borne heavily upon the Hungarian churches and their activities. We have seen enough to convince us that they believe it necessary to weaken these institutions, in order to bring about the speedy Roumanization of the population, which, as we have said, appears to be their goal.

In this report we shall speak only of their actions with respect to the Unitarian church, which we were commissioned to visit, and of their treatment of ministers whom we have personally seen. The evidence as to Roumanian purpose could, of course, be greatly strengthened by inquiry among ministers of other denominations, of whom we saw enough to know that all Hungarian churches in Transylvania are in the same boat. We shall touch first on persecution of ministers, and then speak of the state of the institution.

(1) MINISTERS.

These, by reason of their position in the community (in the villages they wield, by virtue of their office, great influence) were from the first marked men; and those who were most active and efficient appeared to be most liable to trouble. The Roumanian policy with them as with others has been to stifle leadership. Of the hundred ministers whom we met many had experiences with their new rulers to relate; we mention here only the nine who were actually arrested.

The Rev. Alexander Zoltán, of Homoródszentmárton, was arrested last September, accused of speaking a single sentence against the Government in a sermon. He was imprisoned for a week in Kolozsvár and then released without trial, but he has been under supervision of the gendarmes ever since.

In Homoródszentpál the minister, the Rev. Joseph Ürmösi, was arrested and held for four days without charge and without trial. He has never learned the reason.

In Sárd we found that the Rev. Michael Kotona had been driven out of his village several times. Three weeks before our visit (May 23rd) he had been driven by the gendarmes from a near by village, where he has a filial congregation.

In Abrudbánya the Unitarian and Presbyterian ministers were arrested together because their church bells were not rung to celebrate the entry of the Roumanians into Budapest.

In Csegez the minister (the Rev. Andrew Bartok) was arrested for not greeting the gendarmes, but was released after a few hours.

In Lokod the minister was arrested on the vague charge of being against the Roumanians.

In Sepsiköröspatak the Rev. Coloman Székely spent sixty-five days in jail because of a gun which a boy who worked for him had hidden on the premises. He was the master, his judges held, and therefore responsible. Although he had already spent more than a month in jail they sentenced him to another month and a fine of 1000 crowns. The gendarmes who first arrested him said this significant thing, i.e., that they were glad to have a minister under arrest. (In the same village, the cantor of the church was taken one Sunday morning, regardless of his duties, and made to drive the gendarmes on a hunting expedition).

Two Unitarian ministers—the Rev. Messrs. Alexius Kiss, of Kissolymos, and Lewis Orban, of Ujszékely—were arrested and interned at Fogaras for four months because they attempted, in accordance with their Bishop's orders, to start denominational schools in their villages. The injustice of their imprisonment is aggravated by the fact that their churches are in Szeklerland, where 'full local autonomy' is guaranteed the people in respect of churches and schools, by the treaty protecting minorities. At Segesvár, where they were imprisoned for a time, everything of value was taken away from them by the soldiers and never returned; this is the usual custom, as we learned from everyone with previous experience among our acquaintances in Transylvania. In Fogaras they were obliged to live at their own expense. They were allowed to return to their families and congregations on January 14th last.

In Nyomát we found a minister, the Rev. Coloman Pethő, still under Roumanian surveillance. From May, 1919, until Easter, 1920, he was either in prison or at home, but not allowed to preach; last Easter season the Prefect, who on a visit asked the people what they wanted most and was told, 'to hear our minister again,' gave him permission to preach until the end of July. On the occasion of his first arrest he was taken to Marosvásárhely and shut up for twenty-four hours in the morgue; from thence he was removed to Kolozsvár, robbed of everything of value and incarcerated in a filthy cell. After four weeks a brother minister, learning of his

imprisonment, succeeded by bribery in investigating the conditions of his confinement. Meanwhile gendarmes, on promise to gain his release, extorted 1600 crowns from his wife and father-in-law. He was freed, but after two weeks was arrested again and only then learned the charge laid against him—i.e., that he had urged young men to cross the Maros and defend Hungary from the Roumanians. It was in connexion with his case that young men were beaten and forced to kneel on kernels of Indian corn, in an effort to induce them to testify against him. The gendarmes, Malos and Dobos, were extorters of money; once Dobos threatened Mrs. Pethő with a box in the ear if money were not given. The case still hangs fire, never having been tried.

(2) RESTRICTIONS ON CONGREGATIONS

Restrictions as to holding of meetings interferes seriously with the legitimate religious work of the congregations. Almost everywhere we found that young peoples's societies had been given up, because of these restrictions. No meetings (other than religious services) are allowed to be held without permission, and a censor must be present. Permission is often difficult to obtain, and we have heard of instances where the authorities have set the date three months in the future. in Szeklerland where the villages are out of the way, and where practically none speaks Roumanian, the item of cost has to be reckoned with. To have the request sent away for translating and to pay the expenses of censor, amounts to a hundred crowns or more—a considerable sum by village standards.

The most effective instrument for weakening the churches, however, was just beginning to be used before we left Transylvania. We refer to the so-called Agrarian Reform. We do not enter into a discussion of the necessity of the merits of this law in general; but we have seen enough of its application to believe that it is being used to reduce the power and effectiveness of the Hungarian churches. Most of the Church endowments as is natural in an agricultural country) are in land. The amounts are not excessive. They vary in different congregations, some being better off than others, but only a few can be called rich. In most villages there is enough church land to assign from 10 to 30 Hungarian acres to the minister and a little less to the teacher, with some left over for repairs of the buildings and other expenses. Often there is a forest, from which the congregation cuts enough wood for minister's and teachers' winter supply. The minister's land, with some payments in kind and in labour, constitutes the principal source of his income. The church as a whole (the denomination as distinguished from the local

congregations) is not a larger landowner, its total amount of arable land being 3723 Hungarian acres.

Land expropriation cannot be hastily carried out; the first case of it in connexion with the church occurred just before our departure in June. This case is, however, a court order, which has been fought at every stage by the attorneys of the church, and may justly be considered to foreshadow the fate of all church endowments in land. It is a deliberate action, in what may prove to be a test case.

The land expropriated is the estate at Bányabük, near Kolozsvár. This consists of 250 Hungarian acres of arable land, a considerably larger acreage of forest and three grist mills—all of which are to be taken. The price to be paid will be determined, in accordance with the royal decree, by its value in 1913, before the war had depreciated money and raised the price of land; i.e., the church will receive, by very conservative estimate, less than a tenth of what it could get at open sale. But no money can repay the church for this estate, which supplies the Unitarian College at Kolozsvár with vegetables and flour, and wood for heating and cooking. By the King's decree (a) only land which could actually be tilled was to be seized; (b) land used for support of educational institutions was to be exempted; and (c) owners were to be allowed to keep a certain number of acres of own choosing. The church protested against expropriation on all three grounds—(a) because forest and mills were included: (b) because all the produce of the estate was directly used for support of the college; (c) because if forced to choose from among its lands, the church would choose this. It also protested against the seizure of any of its lands, under another clause of the King's decree, exempting in general terms endowments of institutions for public welfare, in which the church might be included. These protests were unavailing.

Although this is the first instance of actual expropriation, it is not the only example of seizure of church land that came to our attention. By a special order (N. 89), issued a month and a half before our arrival (February 20, 1920), local officials were permitted to take land exceeding thirty Hungarian acres from any proprietor and give it on lease to country inhabitants until expropriation could be made effective. By this system of 'forced leases,' 1473 of the Unitarian church's 3723 acres were taken. Gradually this form of temporary expropriation was being carried out among also the congregations, not always in accordance even with Roumanian rules. In Küküllő-széplak, for example, thirteen of the congregation's twenty-one acres were taken, and in Torda, where the church is particularly well endowed, all of its 300 acres were taken. Six acres had been taken out of fifty-two acres in Nyomát, and twenty-one had been taken (for a single Roumanian peasant) out of seventy-one acres in Magyar-sáros. In Alsójára all except thirty-two acres had been taken of the congregation's 310 acres (which includes forest and rough pasture-

land). In Mézskő, Szentgerice and Bölön proceedings were beginning, and in other places there were indications that proceedings would soon begin.

One hundred acres of the arable land on the estate at Bányabük had been taken by forced rental before the whole estate was condemned for expropriation. We visited this estate, and what we learned there shows how the 'land reform' is working in practice. The peasants to whom it was given, at a yearly rental of sixty crowns an acre, having already as much land as they cared to work, leased it at 100 crowns an acre to a speculator who in turn leased it, at what profit we could not discover, to the same man who used to hire it of the church. It is only since the war that the church has been working the land itself.

Mention should be made here, though this action was taken not under the Land Reform Law but as an ordinary requisition, of the seizure of the old Unitarian College building in Kolozsvár. In October all the lodgers in this building were turned out to make room for the Roumanian railway directorate. This involved a loss in rent to the church of from 15,000 to 20,000 crowns yearly; but up till our departure all attempts to obtain rent from the Government had failed.

III — DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS

Before the Roumanian occupation children in Transylvania were educated either in state schools, or in denominational schools, supported by the state. Of these schools the Roumanian authorities have made every effort to gain control. The state schools they took over completely; from the denominational schools (Hungarian) they withdrew all support. The Hungarians of Transylvania regard the Roumanian state schools with distrust, and most of them will not send their children to them. This distrust is not unjustified we found at Vöröspatak, one of the few places where the state school is still used. There the Roumanian teacher had already taken his Hungarian Unitarian pupils several times to the Greek church. Because of this feeling, that the schools are to be used as instruments of Roumanization, the churches have organized many new denominational schools, shouldering, in spite of losses of income, the heavy extra financial burden involved. Among the 105 Unitarian congregations which we visited, there were only fifteen where the children go to the state schools.

In some places the new schools were organized without interference on the part of the authorities; in other places many stumbling blocks were placed in the way. In at least four villages—Csegez, Kissolymos, Ujszékely and Szentábrahám, the organization of

denominational schools was not allowed at all, and in the three last-named the children were compelled by force to go to the State schools. In the first-named place, the teacher nominated by the Bishop having been rejected, the children have not gone to school for a year. This is the case also in Küküllőszéplak, where Unitarian children used to go to a Presbyterian school. The Roumanians took over the school, and there was at the time of our visit no school in Hungarian in the village. In Sárd, likewise, parents would not send their children to a Government school; but here they are not able to support one for themselves.

In a number of place the authorities, although they have not directly opposed the new schools, have adopted a dog-in-the-manger policy with respect to buildings and equipment. In Torockoszentgyörgy they keep two teachers and a whole building idle, and in Alsó-felsőszentmihály a teacher and a building are without pupils; in both these places a flourishing church school must use makeshift quarters. In Kolozs, where the Hungarian State recently erected a modern building, the Roumanians use two of the rooms and keep one empty, while the combined Unitarian-Presbyterian school meets in the two ministers' houses. In Torocko two rooms are assigned to 220 Unitarian children, one room is given to twelve Roumanian children, and one room is kept empty. In Csekefalva one room is allowed for school purposes; the rest are locked up. In seven places—Kis- és Nagy-Kede, Csekefalva, Gagy, Szentgerlice, Felsőrákos, Alsóboldogfalva, Nagyaita—the Roumanian Government charges the churches rent for buildings where the Hungarian Government formerly conducted free schools.

A number of congregations had in times past built their own school houses. Some of these had been given over to the Hungarian State, with the agreement that they would be returned if the church wanted to conduct its own school again; others had been leased to the State. In some communities the buildings were village property. There are many instances where the Roumanian Government has failed to respect these rights. The most flagrant example is in Csegez, where we found that the Roumanian village priest had moved from his own parochial residence, and was living, rent free, in the school building, the property of the Unitarian church. Meanwhile, as has already been noted the Hungarian children of Csegez have for the past year not gone to school at all. In Sinfalva the church is allowed to use part of its own school building, but the Roumanians have seized the teacher's lodging without compensation. In Szentháromság, likewise, and Csikfalva, the gendarmes have lived in the teacher's house for a year without paying rent. (Lack of suitable quarters for a teacher in a Transylvanian village is a serious matter.) In Vámos-Udvarhely, a filial congregation to Küküllőszéplak, the school building is the property of a church educational

organization, with headquarters at Kolozsvár; nevertheless, it was taken by the Roumanians for a Government school, without payment of any kind. Not only was a combined Presbyterian-Unitarian school driven out, but the Unitarian congregation was deprived of its only meeting place. In Kálnok, Árkos, Bágyon, Vargyásy, Recsenyéd, Homoródjánosfalva, Alsósimentfalva, and Homoródkarácsonfalva rent is demanded for the use of buildings erected by church or village. In Magyarszovát and Okland the Hungarian State erected a school building on church land; in the first-named place the Roumanians allow the church the use of two out of eight rooms and offer to sell the building to the church; in Okland they charge the congregation rent for the use of the school.

In Marosvásárhely and in other large towns, municipal schools have been taken over by the State, and the language changed to Roumanian. For the higher schools it has been necessary to import pupils from Roumania, while Hungarian pupils are crowded in buildings too small for them. In this report, however, we deal with Unitarian church schools only, and do not give details regarding the others. All should be investigated.

IV—VIOLATIONS OF THE MINORITIES TREATY

Our observations in Transylvania show that the treaty signed by Roumania, December 9, 1919, guaranteeing (liberty and justice to all inhabitants, both of the old kingdom of Roumania or of the territory added thereto, to whatever race, language or religion they may belong), has been and is in several particulars being violated.

(1) CHURCH ENDOWMENTS.

We have already shown that the expropriation of the estate of the Unitarian church in Bányabük violates the terms of the Roumanian decree under which the expropriation is made, and have drawn the conclusion that the purpose of the expropriation is rather to weaken the church than to give landless people opportunity to possess land. We believe it also to be in violation of the treaty of December 9, 1919. Professor Wambaugh, of the Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Mass., in an opinion given March 13, 1920, declared that 'when Roumania eventually acquires sovereignty over Transylvania there will rest an obligation under the treaty of December 9, 1919 . . . not to interfere with sectarian property used for religious or educational purposes.'

(2) SCHOOL PROPERTY.

The taking over of buildings belonging to congregations and villages, and charging rent to their rightful owners for the use of

them, is a violation of the same kind as that noted in the preceding paragraph. Most of the examples given in the section on 'Denominational Schools' are in Szeckler villages, and in these villages the taking over of buildings belonging to church or community violates also another section of the treaty of December 9, 1919, whereby 'Roumania agrees to accord to the communities of the Saxons and Szecklers in Transylvania local autonomy in regard to scholastic and religious matters, subject to the control of the Roumanian State' (Art. ii. Chapter i.).

(3) STATE AID FOR CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS.

No Hungarian schools or churches are now enjoying State aid in Transylvania. The treaty of December 9, 1919, provides that 'in towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Roumanian nationals belonging to racial, religious, or linguistic minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal, or other budget, for educational religious, or charitable purposes' (Art. x. Chapter i.). We believe that so long as the Roumanian State supports the orthodox church and its schools out of public funds, it is obligated under this article of the treaty to give proportional support to the churches and schools of other denominations.

(4) LIBERTY OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

One way in which this is being flagrantly violated was called to our attention again and again. The treaty of December 9, 1919, provides that 'persons who have exercised the right to opt (for another nationality) must within the next twelve months transfer their place of residence to the State for which they have opted. They will be entitled to retain their *immovable* property in Roumanian territory' (Art. iii. Chapter i.). We met so many people who were refused leave to go to Hungary until they had disposed of their real estate in Transylvania that we went to Prince Sturdza, Chief Prefect at Kolozsvár, to inquire about the matter. He informed us that there is a general law in Roumania forbidding the owning of real estate by aliens. If that be so, it is clearly inconsistent with the terms of a treaty whose stipulations (at least those contained in Articles ii to viii. of Chapter i.) Roumania has undertaken to recognize as fundamental laws, and has agreed that 'no law, regulation or official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation or official action prevail over them' (Art. i. Chapter i.).

Mrs. Urmösi, a widow, whom we met at the house of her brother-

in-law, minister of Homorodszentpál, wishes to go to Budapest to practice her profession as a trained nurse. She is unable to obtain permission to leave the country as a Hungarian unless she first sells a little house which she owns. Dr. Sigismund Jakabházy, formerly Professor of Medicine in the University at Kolozsvár, was appointed recently to a vacant chair in the University at Budapest. He cannot go to fill the appointment unless his wife will sell a property of hers, inherited from her father, near Székelykeresztúr.

POSTSCRIPT

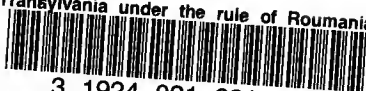
WRITING in the *Inquirer* (October 30, 1920) the Rev. W. H. Drummond says:—Mr. Snow's Report is based on the most careful investigations in over 100 parishes in various parts of the country during a tour of three months. It substantiates, with a fullness of detail which only the intrepid enterprise of Mr. Snow and his companions has made available, the grave charges against the Roumanian authorities. The ancient Protestant churches, Unitarian and Presbyterian alike, are in danger of extermination. It is the most serious religious situation in Europe at the present time. If Transylvania were not so remote and consequently so little known and our own minds were not so deeply preoccupied with grave cares and anxieties of our own, the country would ring with protests. As it is, no friend of religious liberty and sound government can afford to treat it with indifference. The facts must be made known, and they are here in Mr. Snow's report with a fullness of detail which cannot simply be brushed aside by the political apologist who wants to avoid inconvenient topics. They are not idle tales or the rash conclusions of the hasty traveller. We venture to say that few pieces of investigation into conditions after the war have been so careful in their attention to detail or carried through with such broad-minded sympathy. Mr. Snow and his companions have won our warmest gratitude and admiration for the courage, resource, and noble public spirit with which they have accomplished a difficult and perilous task. They have a right to ask of their friends in England and America that their enterprise shall not be fruitless. This terrible report will miss its aim if it does not stir public opinion and bring some relief to the miseries and persecutions which it describes.



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